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Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2606

April 16, 1993

USDA 1994 BUDGET -- Farm programs maintain their current structure in the fiscal year 1994 budget for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but one aspect of reform is the creation of the Farmer Service Agency. It will provide one-stop shopping for farmers participating in USDA programs, cutting red tape for the farmer while cutting costs to the American taxpayer. The budget contains Department-wide savings of \$900 million dollars. There is an \$800 million increase for rural housing, \$375 million for health, fire and rescue services, \$370 million for water and sewer services, \$200 million for small business investment, and a \$350 million increase is directed at the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children, enabling it to serve an additional 400,000 participants. "The budget proposals treats farmers and rural America fairly," Secretary Espy says. "And it holds out hope to some of the neediest in our country." **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

1993 COTTON CROP -- Planting of the cotton crop for this year is underway in many sections of the nation. Wet conditions have delayed progress in Texas, Arizona, and California. Replantings have already occurred in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Producers intend to plant 13.4 million acres of cotton this year. Upland acreage is projected at 13.2 million acres, up one percent from last year, and extra-long-staple at only 205,000, down 22 percent. Low prices and an expansion in the acreage reduction program requirement led to the reduction. **Contact: Bob Skinner (202) 219-0840.**

FARMER HEALTH RESEARCH -- The National Cancer Institute, Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences will track for ten years the health of 100,000 farm families in Iowa and North Carolina. They will study personal lifestyle characteristics such as how much time is spent outdoors, pesticide and chemical use, family health history, eating and smoking habits, and how these items relate to cancer. The study will be largest such examination of American farm families. **Contact: Michael Alavanja (301) 496-1611.**

GOOD BUY -- Current supplies of all the best known apple varieties are higher than last year's levels. Wholesale prices for apples are down in the major growing areas. Consumers should find the abundance of apples reflected in lower retail prices, making "an apple a day" a good buy. **Contact: Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.**

ASSISTANCE FOR CORN PRODUCERS -- Low test weight, foreign material, damaged kernels, and excessive moisture were some of the factors reducing the value of corn in some states. Drying charges and discounts often exceeded the value of the corn. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy has announced new assistance for producers who suffered losses from reduced quality caused by damaging weather or related conditions. Producers should contact their county ASCS office to see if they qualify. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

BATTLING THE CORN EARWORM -- Corn earworm and fall armyworm moths migrate from Texas and Mexico in early summer to attack corn, cotton, soybeans, tomatoes and other crops in five states. A female earworm can lay as many as 1,000 eggs on crop plants, costing U.S. producers \$2 billion a year in lost production and insecticide application. Field tests show that a nematode, a tiny wormlike organism, can kill the pests in the soil before they become adult moths. The nematode *Steinernema riobravis* is known to infect only crop pests such as earworms and armyworms, and kills 90 to 100 percent of the pests in 48 hours. Outdoor tests have begun in Arizona, California, Georgia, and in Mexico. If successful, farmers will have a new nonchemical way to protect their crops and reduce the pests' migrations. **Contact: Jimmy Raulston (210) 969-4807.**

MEAT IMPORTS -- Australia and New Zealand have signed voluntary restraint agreements to limit their shipments of meat items during the year. The U.S. Meat Import Act places a limit of 1.2 billion pounds for 1993. Imports are expected to total just 100,000 pounds less than that amount, preventing an import quota from being imposed. Australia and New Zealand are the two largest foreign suppliers of fresh beef to the U.S. market, supplying 90 percent of imports subject to the Meat Import Act. **Contact: Jim Fowler (202) 720-1352.**

BEEF PRICES AND CONSUMPTION SLIP -- U.S. cattle inventory is forecast to continue a modest herd expansion that began in 1989. Slow rebuilding of inventory will result in small increases in beef production. Nevertheless the growth will not offset population increases and export demand for beef, therefore per capita beef consumption will slip slightly. As weather conditions improve, fed cattle marketings will increase, and with supplies of pork and poultry growing, cattle prices are likely to decline in the second and third quarters of this year. **Contact: Peter Downing (202) 720-7285.**

CELL RESEARCH -- Cells that produce components of milk are now being grown in the laboratory. Scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service say studying cells from cow mammary glands could lead to new insights on methods for stopping bacterial infections that cause mastitis. The infection costs U.S. dairy farmers \$2 billion annually in lost production and treatment. Using culture cells in research instead of cows is economical, and scientists can directly witness the cells' response to medications or other treatments. That is not possible in studies of live animals. **Contact: Eduardo Cifrian (301) 504-8330.**

FARMLINE MAGAZINE -- USDA has stopped publishing "Farmline" magazine. "Farmline" was distributed monthly for 14 years, reporting agricultural economics research in a feature style for a general audience. USDA is reviewing methods to disseminate the information more economically. **Contact: Jack Harrison (202) 219-0494.**

NEW DIRECTORY -- USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service has produced two new directories of export elevators and grain export firms. The Export Elevator Directory lists major elevators from which U.S. grain is exported and where official grain inspection and weighing services are provided. The Directory of Firms Registered to Export Grain includes companies or individuals who buy, handle, weigh, or transport grain in excess of 15,000 metric tons for sale in foreign commerce. Copies are available by calling (202) 720-8262. **Contact: Dana Stewart (202) 720-5091.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1871 -- Gary Crawford reports on the Administration's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 1994. Its a look at what the new numbers mean for producers and consumers. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1353 -- From yucca to cactus; weight loss or money loss; the diet dilemma; you're never too old to exercise; in school and homeless. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1863 -- USDA News Highlights; U.S. farmers feed the world; irrigation and water quality; killer sweet potatoes; we C.A.R.E. about farm resources. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1616 -- Nematode controls corn earworm; mass-producing nematodes; new and improved G.R.I.N.; stand-alone germplasm info; donations aid museum completion. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, Apr. 21, dairy outlook; Thursday, Apr. 22, oil crops outlook, livestock & poultry update, cattle on feed; Tuesday, Apr. 27, crop & weather update, vegetable outlook; Thursday, Apr. 29, catfish production, world tobacco situation; Friday, Apr. 30, ag prices. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on the national parasite collection, and reports from Florida on after the hurricane: tropical fish farming; DeBoria Janifer looks at diet and cholestrol; Pat O'Leary reports on the tomato killers.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on the weather and crop situation; USDA world board chairman James Donald on crop production estimates; USDA economist Cathy Greene on the agricultural outlook; USDA economist Dave Harvey on aquaculture.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer on new high-tech rice; Lynn Wyvill on exercise and aging, and food safety for children and the elderly.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

THE WHEAT LOVES IT...but cattle producers are having a difficult time, says **John Morris** (KSAL, Salina, KS). The region has received nearly half again as much rain as normal, producing deep mud for feed lot operators. John says weather conditions during the winter caused an increase in calving losses, estimated at \$6 million in a two county area he serves. Corn and milo producers are considering fast maturing varieties because of the likely delay in getting into the fields.

NO DELIVERY...of seed is being accepted in the area served by **Jim Fleming** (WDZ, Decatur, IL). Producers are holding off until the weather situation is more clear. Cool, wet weather has delayed field work 3 weeks. Producers may shift their seed orders to fast growing varieties. Jim says conditions favor a boost in no-till acreage.

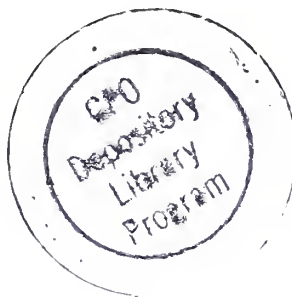
LOOKING...for an ag reporter with strong TV producing abilities, interviewing skills, and on-camera experience, says **Larry Lyle** (AgDay, South Bend, IN). Send resume and tape to Larry at P.O. Box 1062, zip code 46624-0062.

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30,000...people attended the Farm Show in Green Bay, WI last month, says **Michael Austin** (WGEE, Green Bay). However, a 5-inch snowfall with 50 mph winds at the close of the show reduced attendance and closed the local schools. Michael has been covering the water quality issue in Wisconsin. He says producers have established a watershed in his region by working with state and USDA personnel. It covers such issues as manure storage, distribution and monitoring water quality.

A NEW NETWORK...is being created in Texas. **Carl Shearer** (KVRP, Haskell, TX) says his station's farm programs will be heard twice a day on a station in the western portion of the state, and that there are plans to add two more stations in a few weeks. Carl says producers indicate they are planting more upland cotton this year, and fewer acres to corn and sorghum.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE...is now available with Comrex encoding for improved audio quality. Its available 24 hours a day on (202) 720-2545.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division